

Friends
- Society of

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EPISTLE

O F

CAUTION

To all Friends Professing the

Blessed Truth;

To Prevent

Injustice and Injury,

And the Reproach thereof in divers
Matters herein Mentioned.

Rom. 13. 8. Owe no Man any thing, but to love
one another: For he that loveth another, hath
fulfilled the Law.

LONDON,

Printed by Tace Sowle, 1698.

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EPISTLE

OF

CHARITY

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE

Blind People

IN

London and the

And the persons therein divers
Matters are mentioned.



Printed by J. Smith, at the

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A N
E P I S T L E
O F

Caution, &c.

Dear Friends,

IN the Love of the Pretious and
Holy *Trath*, in a Conscienti-
ous Concern for the Honour
of God, and in a Christian Care,
that the *Ancient Repute*, that our
Holy Religion hath obtained by
the *Just Dealing*, *Upright Walking*,
Circumspect and *Inoffensive Conver-*
sation of those that have not only
professed the Truth, but loved and
obeyed it, and were Careful in
their *Words*, *Habit*, *Living*, *Furni-*
ture, *Commerce* and whole *Conver-*

sation to preserve the same, by answering in all those things that Righteous and Holy *Principle of Truth*, and *Witness*, that God hath placed in the Consciences of all Mankind, notwithstanding the Scorn and great Sufferings they met withal.

But, to our great Grief, we have found, that some (especially of late times) which make Profession of the Worthy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ amongst us, have not had that due Regard thereunto, and the Honour thereof, as they ought, nor have been so Careful, as becomes them, in the Management of themselves, and their *Affairs* and *Trade* in the World; but have *Inconsiderately* and *Unadvisedly* over-charged themselves with *Debts*, till they could not duly and justly discharge them, and by Neglecting their *Affairs* and
Trade

Trade, and being too Extravagant in their *Habits*, *Furniture* of their *Houses*, and *Living* too high, and above what their Income would answer, and than becometh their Profession; and thereby have hurt themselves: And for want of a *Due* and *Timely Inspection* into the *State* of their *Affairs*, or Stopping, when they have been Sensible of their own *Inability*, have gone on, till they have been under such Straights and Difficulties to satisfy their *Creditors* just Demand in due time, and that when they have come for Money, to put them off, have given them Expectations; and sometimes (when pressed hard upon) made *Promises* to *Pay* within sometime Limited, and yet have not performed. And these things have been, and are attended with Evil Consequences, not only to the Persons themselves

selves, but greatly Injurious to many others, and have been Occasion of *Stumbling* and *Offence*, and have also brought *Dis honour* to *Truth*, and a *Reproach* upou Us, and a *Scandal* upon our Holy Profession and Religion.

Wherefore it is our Tender Counsel and Christian Advice, in the Love of God, that all would truly Weigh and duly Consider these things, and Examine themselves with the *Light* of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, that each one may see, how things are with them; For they that do well, love the *Light*, and bring their Deeds to it, that they may see, they are wrought in God; but those that do Evil, hate the *Light*: And it's those, that with Grief we do declare unto you, that by walking contrary to what they profess, in not keeping under the Guidance of the good Spirit of the Lord, and not learning
of,

of, or being seasoned with the Grace of God; they run into these things.

1. Therefore we Exhort and Counsel all to be Careful, not to launch out into *Trade*, beyond what they can honourably, and punctually Answer, and without Injury to others.

2. That no one keep another out of their *Just Debt* to their Prejudice, beyond the *usual Time* of *Payment*, be the Time what it will they agree to pay at, they ought to be exact to it.

3. That every Faithful and Honest *Friend*, that knows any Reputed *Friend*, or *Professor* of the Truth among us *faulty* in any of these things afore-named, or any other thing unbecoming Truth, or our Christian Profession, that such Friend, that knows thereof, in Brotherly Love and Tenderneſs

do privately speak to him or her thereof, and *Counsel, Admonish* and *Reprove* the Person offending, as the Case requires; and if he or she doth not hear and amend, then to take *One* or *Two* more, and speak to him or her again; and if he or she refuses to hear them, that then such *Friend* or *Friends* acquaint the *Monthly-Meeting*, where the party belongs, or such *Friends* thereof, that are appointed by the *Monthly-Meeting* to hear such things in the *Intervals* of *Monthly-Meetings*, that they may speedily call a *Meeting*; and the said *Meeting* to do and advise, as in the Wisdom of God they shall see the Case requires.

4. And we do *Advise* and *Counsel* all *Friends*, as they tender their own Good, the Honour of Truth, and Preservation of our Holy Profession without Blame, to *Inspect* their outward Affairs, at least once
(or

(*or oftner*) in a Tear, that they may know, how the Case stands with them, and to order and manage themselves accordingly. For by Experience we have found, that a frequent Examination of our selves, and Inspection of things relating to our outward and inward States and Conditions, with the Light of Christ, hath proved greatly beneficial, as we have diligently waited upon God, and humbly made our *Supplication* to him in the Spirit of his Son. And we have observed, that it's those, that have declined in their Love and Obedience to Christ, and the due Observation of his *Equal and Royal Law* (which saith, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*, James 2. 8. And, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, even so do ye to them*, Mat. 7. 12.) that have not proved Faithful in the unrighteous *Mammon*.

mon. And as Christ said, *Luke 16. 12.* If ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

5. If therefore any upon Examination find themselves in such a *declining Condition*, that they can but barely pay their just *Debts*, or fully satisfy for the same; that such immediately advise with *Two or Three faithful Friends* of the *Monthly-Meeting*, to which he or she belongs, and make his or her Case known to them, and take their *Advice* therein.

6. And if any Person shall be so Unjust, to persist and go on, after he knows himself to be in a *declining Condition*, and afterwards *Break*, and cannot pay *Twenty Shillings* in the *Pound*, or fully satisfy his *Creditors*, he or they so wilfully and knowingly persisting, till their *Circumstances* are such as afore-said,

said, such Persons for their persisting without the Consent or Liberty of their *Creditors*, and Contrary to the righteous and equal Principle of *Truth* in themselves, and to our Christian Advice; we cannot esteem them *Friends* of *Truth*, or afford them any *Assistance*, as such; but must be necessitated (if they do not repent thereof, and sensibly acknowledge their Fault) to *Testify* against them, as *Enemies* to *Truth*.

7. And for the Prevention of these things, and the ill Effects that follow (and that all that walk not according to Truth in their Conversations, may be visited and admonished) we hereby signify, that we have recommended to the several *Monthly-Meetings*, in the Love of Christ to watch over all their *Members*, in and belonging to their respective *Monthly-Meetings*; and

to

to take Care, to appoint some faithful *Friends* in each *Meeting* to Visit them, and to endeavour, that this our Brotherly *Advice* and Christian *Care* for the Honour of God, his holy Name and precious Truth may be duly observed, and made effectual to the Good Ends proposed; and that all may be Orderly in their whole Conversation, that so none among us may over-charge themselves with *Debts*, nor Trade beyond their *Abilities*, but keep Clear from Injuring others, or Adventuring or Hazzarding others *Estates* to Sea, or otherwise, when they have not *Estates* of their own to answer. And also that *Friends* be Careful to perform all their *Promises*, *Obligations* and *Contracts*, and make payment of Just *Debts*, and not tediously delay or keep back the *Hire* of *Labourers* and *Manufactures*, beyond the time appointed

appointed for Payment, and there-
by give them Just Cause of Com-
plaint of great Injury and Oppression,
Oh Consider, what the Apostle
James saith, *The Hire*
of the Labourers, which
is kept back by Fraud,
crieth, and the cries of
them are entred into
the Ears of the LORD of Sabbath.

James 5. 4.
See also, Levit.
19. 13.
Deut. 24. 14.

And therefore, let all be Careful
to Avoid such things, and living
above what their *Estates* will bear
(by keeping *Horses* and *Coantry-*
Houses, whereby great *Wast* is
made by *Loss of Time* and *Neglect*
of *Business*.) For *Pride* (as the
Wise-man said) goes before *Destru-*
ction, and a *haughty Spirit* before the
Fall: And we have seen it fulfil-
led upon some, that have gone
thereinto, and have for a time
appeared as great, nay higher in
their beginning, than many o-
thers

thers have done, when they have left off, who (by their Honest Endeavours) have gotten *Estates*: But such have often ended with a *Stink and Reproach*.

And this hath happened, because they have not walked in that *Humility* and *Fear* towards God; which all that would attain *True Riches, Honour* and *Life*, and be made partakers of his Blessing, must dwell in. And it is not only the *Duty*, but *Interest* of every one of us, that would do well here, and be happy hereafter, to Abide in the holy *Fear* of God, and walk according to his Righteous Law in all things; that those *Reproaches* and *Scandals*, that have of late been brought in a great Degree upon the *Truth*, *Us*, and our holy *Profession*, thereby may for the future be prevented.

And it's Advised, That Friends
be

be Careful to observe the *Time* Agreed upon to *Meet* together for the Worship of God, as the *Quarterly-Meeting* hath recommended to us (held the 3^d the of 11th Month, 1697.) which is as followeth.

“ That Friends take Care to At-
 “ tend the *First-days* and *Week-*
 “ *days-Meetings* at the Usual times
 “ appointed, viz. About the 9th
 “ hour in the *Morning*, as near as
 “ they can, and in the *Winter-*
 “ *Season* about the 2^d hour in the
 “ *Afternoon*; and in the *Summer-*
 “ *time*, when the Days are long,
 “ about the 3^d hour in the *After-*
 “ *noon*, on those Days, which are
 “ not *First-days*.

And as they are truly Diligent to answer that *Christian Advice*, not to forsake the *Assembling* of themselves together; and when met, Reverently and in *Fear* and *Humility*
 Wait

Wait upon the Lord in the Gift of his holy Spirit, all will be made sensible of their *Inward States and Conditions*; and as they are Exercised in a Christian Travel of Spirit, and supplicate God in the Spirit of his Son, to help them and supply their Wants, they may be enabled to walk in *Obedience to Truth*, and be endued with the *Wisdom* thereof to order their Affairs with *Discretion*; the Want whereof hath been one great Cause, that some have gone into those things, which we herein caution against. For those, that have neglected their *Christian Duty of Meeting* together to Wait upon God, and Worship and Serve him, have often not well spent their Time, but misspent it.

So

So in the Love and Service of
Truth (greatly desiring, all things
herein advised may be duly obser-
ved and practised) we Remain

Your Friends and Brethren

*Francis Camfield,
William Chandler,*

Sign'd on behalf of
the Friends and Bre-
thren of the six-weeks-
Meeting held in London
the 29th of the 1st
Month, 1698.

*John Harwood,
Williams Ingram,
William Beech,
John Constantine,*

B

Post.

Postscript.

AND *Dear Friends and Brethren*, that are *Heads and Masters of Families*, we tenderly Exhort you, in true Brotherly Love, that ye may be *Examples* in all things in your Families, and faithfully and in good Conscience discharge your Duty in the *Place and Station* you are in, as such that know, you are Accountable unto God, and are desirous to give up your Account with Joy, and not with Grief. Oh Therefore wait upon God, and pray to him for Wisdom, that ye may be endued therewith, and in the Fear of God, and Authority of his Powerful Truth discountenance and endeavour

your

your to keep down in your Children and Servants that Spirit, which is not of God, and that would elevate their Minds above his Fear, and would draw them into the Love of the World, and the things thereof, which are not of God. For in the World is the *Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life*, which *Youth* are too Inclenable to follow. And *Friends*, do not spend any of that Substance God hath blessed you with, and made you Stewards of, to gratifie that in your Children or Servants which ye have known the Judgments of God for in your selves; But you, that God hath given Children to, be Careful to Train them up in the Admonition of the Lord, and in the way, in which they should go; that they may not depart from it, when they are old: Neither Countenance them

in any thing, which is unbecoming the Plainness and Simplicity of that Precious and Holy Truth, God Almighty hath blessed us with the Knowledge of; and in which, as we live and abide, we enjoy Peace, and partake of Blessings from him.

And *Dear Friends*, Let us stir up, encourage and give opportunity to our *Children* and *Servants*, to frequent our publick *Meetings* for the Worship of God in due time, to wait upon the Lord, that they may know a growing in the Truth. And all ye, that are *Servants*, and make Profession of Truth with us, we Exhort and Intreat you in the Love of God, that ye demean your selves in your respective Places in all things, as becomes our Holy Profession, and in that *Plainness* and *Humility*, which Truth leads into, both in your *Words* and *Apparel*; and exceed

ceed not the Bounds of Truth,
 nor let your Minds out after those
 things, that do not profit to God-
 ward: Neither let your Adorn-
 ing be the outward Adorning,
 but that of a meek and quiet Spi-
 rit. And be Careful to discharge
 a good Conscience towards God
 and Men in all things, and not
 be *Eye-Servants*, nor *Busy-bodies*,
 nor *Tale-bearers*, nor *Tattlers*,
 nor *Back biters*, and keep out of
 Strife and Contention, and let
your Words be few and savory;
 and with Singleness of Heart, as
 unto the Lord, discharge your
 selves in your Service and Places.
 And as ye are Careful and Faith-
 ful in that which is anothers, ye
 will procure Love in others to you.
 For when the righteous Principle
 of Light and Truth in all is an-
 swer'd, the Doctrine of Christ
 our Saviour in all things adorned,
 then,

then the Peace and Blessing of God is enjoyed. And then there will be Encouragement for you, when ye become *Masters* or *Heads* of *Families*, and Parents of Children, to persevere in Faithfulness unto the Lord, and to be Careful to wait upon God, and pray to him, that ye may be preserved in the Love, and Obedience to Truth, and endued with Power and Wisdom to discharge your respective Duties, and answer this our Christian *Advice*, avoiding the things cautioned against, and following those Exhorted unto; that so we may, as Children of one Father and Household of Faith, grow up more and more unto a Habitation for God in and through his holy Spirit.

And all *Friends*, both High and Low, *Rich* and *Poor*, Young and Old,

God will men Fa- en, to to n, he h, f ve i- gs g e r y - s
Old, Live in *Love*, live in *Meek-
ness*, live in *Humility*, live in *Cha-
stity*, live in *Self-Denial*, live in
the *Cross* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*;
and in that ye will have Peace, in
that ye will receive Strength to
walk blameless in the Sight of God
and Man.

THE END.